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Issues for the 90's

Bureau of Land Management

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Executive Summary

The purpose of this briefing book is to present the best judgments of senior career managers on policy or operational issues where there is a need to consider new direction and program emphasis for the next decade. It is designed for appointees of the new Administration and was written in the Fall of 1988, but updated through January 1989.

It is the hope of these Bureau of Land Management (BLM) career managers that this document will assist the new Administration in policy formation, direction and decision making.

By the nature of its congressional mandate and mission, BLM is engaged not only in the management of lands and natural resources, but perhaps more significantly, in the management of peoples' use of the lands and resources. The multiple use concept insures that the BLM will often be required to mediate between groups or individuals with conflicting purposes in mind.

While there are numerous policy and priority issues facing the Bureau, a limited number have been selected based on their importance or ripeness for decision. By no means is the list of issues in this document all encompassing.

This document omits detail which can be supplied later in briefings and/or papers depending on interest and need. It is designed to stimulate interest and provide a basic introduction to the Bureau and a view of important program issues.

After the Background section following this Executive Summary, a section entitled Issues For The 90's addresses program issues under three major headings: 1) Resource Management and Environmental Protection; 2) People and Public Land: Important Relationships; and 3) Agency Management in the 90's.

A brief on the three major headings and a concise statement of each program issue follow.

Resource Management and Environmental Protection

During the decade of the 80's, BLM developed a host of programs and emphasized a number of others - outdoor recreation, wildlife and fisheries, toxic materials management, and wetland enhancement, to name a few - which are now poised for implementation in the 1990's. What additional guidance, policy, and support need to be developed to assure effective implementation of these programs, and what additional policies/programs are needed to serve the nation into the 21st Century?

Providing for Outdoor Recreation

Bureau lands and waters provide a wide variety of opportunities to a substantial number of Americans seeking outdoor recreational opportunities. With greater leisure time and affluence, demands are growing and are expected to continue to expand. To better provide for the enjoyment and safety of the public land visitor and to protect the natural resources from indiscriminate human-activity, BLM stands ready to implement a multi-faceted plan titled Recreation 2000: A Strategic Plan. The issue now is how to best implement it and at what rate.

Wildlife and Fisheries Management

Bureau lands are also home to a substantial number of the Nation's fish and wildlife species. Ranging from large game animals to raptors to anadromous fish to a small threatened and endangered plant or animal, they all play an important role in ecological diversity, the economy and overall public enjoyment. Similar to the recreation plan above, the Bureau has developed a comprehensive wildlife and fisheries program, Fish and Wildlife 2000: A Plan for the Future. Like Recreation 2000, the issue is how to best implement this plan and at what rate.

Wilderness Review Process

The Bureau is nearing the end of its legislatively mandated work in reviewing portions of its lands for possible designation as wilderness by Congress. Over the past decade or more, $100 million has been spent in inventories, studies, public involvement, environmental analysis and reports. Based on statutes, the Secretary must submit recommendations to the President by October 21, 1991. This can be met if the current schedule is fully supported, which requires full involvement by the Bureau and Departmental leadership.

Land Exchanges

Due to the nature of settlement, claims and other public land disposals and reserves over the past two hundred years, the lands retained under BLM stewardship are more an accident of history than an orderly, planned system of land tenure. Land exchanges are a significant management tool to improve on-the-ground management of public lands, to protect high value public resources now in private hands, and to consolidate all ownerships. Bureau exchange and acquisition programs could enhance management of public lands with substantial benefits for natural resources. Other agency exchanges would be considered and completed at a more moderate pace.

Rangeland Management

Considerable public attention has been focused on the Bureau's efforts to develop a comprehensive strategy to implement acceptable grazing decisions and monitor costs. Range condition, ratings, riparian/wetland, maintenance, improvements, and grazing fees are critical factors in formulating a comprehensive strategy.

Wild Horse and Burro Program

The protection of wild horses and burros in a 1971 Act was instrumental in a steady increase in population over the following decade, to the extent that numbers began to far exceed the capacity of the range to support them. Program emphasis on capture and private placement of excess animals has frequently been a controversial activity, although a necessary one. As the Bureau approaches sustainable management numbers it is timely to review the program for future management of in-place horse and burro populations.

O & C Forest Management Policy

BLM manages over 2 million acres of the most productive timber lands in the Nation. They are commonly known as Oregon and California (O&C) grant lands and have some unique legislative direction. Located in the rain forest belt of western Oregon, they yield enough commercial timber annually to build a major city such as Portland, Oregon, but are also important for many other values such as recreation, wildlife, fisheries and water quality. Resource management plans are now being formulated to guide activities to the year 2000 and beyond under policies formulated in 1983. It is timely to review these policies and supporting legal opinions to permit that planning to continue as scheduled.

Forest/Woodland Management

Both internally and externally, the management philosophy for forestland beyond the O&C lands has been an issue. During FY 1988, an analysis was conducted to look at managing these lands based on their production of forest or woodland products, on a total ecosystem approach, and on a custodial approach while only responding to cost effective demands for products.

Toxic Materials Management

Growing national concern and recent stringent laws governing the use and safe disposal of toxic materials have created many issues in the management of the BLM's Public Lands System and programs. A host of questions must be addressed and, by Congressional direction, a study of the Bureau's Toxic Materials Management program is anticipated in FY 1989. Approaches must be formulated as to how the Bureau, and perhaps the Department, can best manage its toxic or hazardous material obligations and responsibilities, and what posture it should take in responding to situations as they are discovered.

Reform of Mining Law Administration

Most metalic minerals on public lands are available for exploration and development through a claim staking process under the 1872 mining law. What new policy positions could the Bureau take in administering minerals that would provide for more equitable management and use of public land resources? If reform of the 1872 Mining Law is contemplated, what are potential areas for change? What regulatory and policy changes need to be reviewed considering the pressures for statutory reform?

Mineral Exploration

How should the Bureau keep open the public lands for mineral exploration and extraction when urban America has seemingly lost sight of the public lands as a major source of tangible resources that make the American life style what it is? The declining availability of public lands has accelerated with increased land withdrawls and land classifications that block mining claims under the Mining Law of 1872 or mineral leases under the Mineral Leasing Act of 1920.

People and Public Land: Important Relationships

If the Bureau is to effectively respond to the Nation's demands for resources over the next decade, citizens and users must recognize the Public Lands System and the managing agency. There is a growing trend, on the part of BLM's publics and customers, to turn to the courts to gain management direction for the Bureau rather than through the established planning process. Frequent use of the courts frustrates professional judgment and frequently delays needed on-the-ground improvement in favor of a more perfect paper product. BLM must build understanding and support for its multiple use mission. The challenge is to design outreach programs that will enhance this recognition and understanding of the managing agency, and forge new, stronger partnerships with our publics.

Recognition of the Public Lands

What is the name for the lands which are managed by BLM? Does BLM need clearer identification of the lands it administers? Use of public lands by the American public is expanding significantly, but citizens are often unable to identify BLM lands on maps or recognize on-the-ground lands managed by the Bureau. This poor identity makes it almost impossible to explain management actions, and difficult to obtain public understanding and acceptance of BLM's congressionally designated mission.

Enhancing Management Decision-Making

At all organization levels of BLM, decision-making often involves issues which are controversial. These situations can and often do result in litigation or proposed legislation by special interests which constrain broad-based, multiple use resource management. Alternatively, in similar situations, BLM managers have often developed and implemented shared decision-making processes which have permitted actions to proceed with excellent support from all participating interests. There is good support within the Bureau for adopting the shared decision-making approach as a bureau-wide operating policy for the 90's. This paper explores the proposition that BLM should implement it in appropriate situations.

External Relations

Should the BLM expand its public outreach to promote a land use ethic on the part of the public? New constituencies, often young and urban, do not understand the land or value the public's resources. Both use and demand for protection of the land are spiraling; Bureau efforts to educate and instill an appreciation on the part of a broad segment of the American public should keep pace with these national trends. The benefits are two-fold: a better informed, more conscientious public, and, more effective protection of the land and its resources.

Agency Management in the 90's

Within the changing demographic and technological environment of our society, the BLM needs to assure:

- An integrated work force, to tap into the total work force and acquire the quality skills it needs;
- development of a motivated work force dedicated to excellence;
- development of Bureau leadership for the future; and
- appropriate use of automated systems in its operations.

Human Resources Management

The BLM workforce must adapt to changes in resource management needs and rapidly evolving technological changes. Progress in recruiting/developing qualified women and minorities has been modest. Workforce demographics have resulted in a large population of middle-aged professionals with limited advancement opportunities. Areas needing increased attention are minority/female recruiting, alternative career paths, and retraining initiatives.

Information Resource Management

The information resource management issue for the 90's is how quickly and how completely the planned automated system is put in place to reap the positive benefits available.

Initiatives To Improve Service and Productivity

The Bureau is experimenting with a variety of new approaches in conducting business with the intent of improving service to the public, improving employee productivity and morale, and enhancing natural resource management. Evaluation of these initiatives and decisions on Bureau-wide implementation are required.

Background

Introduction

The Public Domain was created in 1780 with the ceding of the "western" lands of the day to the Federal government by several of the original 13 states. It was enlarged during the early days of the Republic by acquisitions such as the Louisiana Purchase. It was managed originally by the Bureau of Land Management's predecessor, the General Land Office. Since its inception the Public Domain has had three historical purposes:

- Generate revenue for the Federal Treasury
- Encourage settlement of America's Western frontiers
- Contribute to the economic and social well-being of the local communities of an expanding United States

Towards the end of the 19th Century a fourth purpose evolved:

- Preserve the amenities of nature for present and future Americans.

The Public Domain is the original land system of the United States. It is the system from which all other Federal land systems were derived: National Parks and National Forests, Military Reservations, and Wildlife Refuges, for example.

The Public Domain ultimately stretched from the Appalachian Mountains to the Pacific. It added up to 1.8 billion acres. Two-thirds of that acreage has been disposed of to individuals, railroads, corporations, and the states. Much of the remaining land has been allocated for use in the several Federal land systems.

The Public Lands System today, a combination of remaining public domain and acquired lands managed exclusively by the Bureau, totals some 273 million acres located primarily in the 11 western states and Alaska. It encompasses almost half of all Federal acreage. The BLM also manages the subsurface mineral estate on some 300 million additional acres where the surface is in private ownership or is administered as part of another Federal land system, e.g., the National Forests and Wildlife Refuges.

The BLM carries out two important historic public land functions for the United States and its citizens on all lands outside the 13 original states: it is the national surveyor of record through its cadastral survey system; it is the ultimate recorder of title to, and land status of, current and former Public Domain lands.

Mandate and Mission

A host of laws direct BLM's policy and operations. Chief among these are:

- Federal Land Policy and Management Act
- Wild and Free-Roaming Horse and Burro Act
- Payment in Lieu of Taxes Act
- Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act
- National Environmental Policy Act
- Acquired Lands Act
- Endangered Species Act
- Clean Water and Clean Air Acts
- Recreation and Public Purposes Act
- Oregon & California Revested Lands Act
- Taylor Grazing Act
- Minerals Leasing Act
- Geothermal Steam Act
- The Mining Law of 1872

The most significant of these is the Federal Land Policy and Management Act, commonly cited as the BLM's Organic Act. Among its many policy statements, four stand out:

- Public Lands will be retained in Federal ownership;
- The Public Lands System will be managed on the principles of multiple use and sustained yield;
- The use of Public Lands is to be accomplished without undue or unnecessary degradation to the land resource;
- The uses to be accommodated on any area of the Public Land will be established through a planning process in which the public will have full participation.

The BLM Mission Statement:

The Bureau is responsible for the balanced management of the public lands and resources and their various values so that they are considered in a combination that will best serve the American people. Management is based upon the principles of multiple use and sustained yield; a combination of uses that takes into account the long-term needs of future generations for renewable and nonrenewable resources. These resources include recreation, range, timber, minerals, watershed, fish and wildlife, wilderness, and natural, scenic, scientific and cultural values.

Management Responsibilities

In general, the BLM's goal in managing renewable resources is to meet, on a sustained yield basis, the Nation's needs for domestic sources of food, fiber, timber, and wildlife; and to make significant contributions to regional and local economies where these resource uses take place. With respect to nonrenewable resources, such as oil, gas, and other minerals, the BLM objective is to provide a secure domestic source of energy and strategically important nonenergy minerals, to encourage orderly and timely development of the resource by the private sector, and to obtain fair market value return to the Federal Government for development of the resource. The BLM also makes available its lands for nonconsumptive human use and enjoyment through recreational, ecological, historical and cultural, and scientific activities.

The Federal Land Policy and Management Act defines multiple use of the Public Lands as the optimum combination of balanced and diverse resource uses that takes into account the long-term needs of future generations for renewable and nonrenewable resources.

The key to effective multiple use management is a land use planning process that provides general direction for resource uses through a five to ten year horizon. Resource Management Plans developed by BLM reflect a strong emphasis on citizen participation.

The Public We Serve:

Historically, BLM's principal customer, or public, has been America's rural population. BLM has been an important element in the social and economic fabric of rural western America. However, much of the current demand for goods and services produced from the Public Lands System now comes from urban America. It is largely America's urban population that uses the food and fiber, the energy and minerals, and seeks out recreation opportunities on lands managed by the BLM.

Public users of BLM managed lands come in many and varied guises: it is the hunter, the fisherman and the family with the off-road vehicle; it is the Izaak Walton League and its Wetland Enhancement Teams; it is the livestock operator, and his banker and barber; it is the state wildlife agency, and the Defenders of Wildlife; it is the logger, the mill operator, and the young couple buying their first home; it is the oil driller seeking new discoveries to power our machinery and the power company needing a right-of-way to deliver electricity to schools, homes, and factories; it is the local community acquiring public land for a new sanitary landfill or a new city park; it is the military seeking vast expanses of open land and airspace for special installations, weapons development, or training areas for national defense; it is the scientists trying to discover new insights about the ecology, the early settlement of the continent, and geologic processes; it is all of these and more.

However, BLM's most important publics are the generations yet to come.

The Natural Resources

The Public Lands System contains a wide variety of natural resources, including the following:

- about 1.4 billion barrels of proven oil reserves and some 12.5 trillion cubic feet of proven natural gas reserves;
- over 10 million animal unit months of forage which supports about 4.3 million head of domestic livestock;
- approximately 96 percent (over 43,000 in FY87) of all wild horses and burros affected under the Wild and Free Roaming Horse and Burro Act of 1971;
- almost 8 million acres of commercial forest land with the capacity to produce some 1.4 billion board feet of timber for annual sale;
- some 80 percent of the Nation's oil shale; all 11 of the Nation's major tar sand sites; world-class deposits of phosphate, sodium, lead, zinc and potash;
- over 7.7 million acres designated as Areas of Critical Environmental Concern, Research Natural Areas, Outstanding Natural Areas or other special land protection status sites;
- habitat for one of every five big game animals in the United States, including caribou, brown and grizzly bears, desert bighorn sheep, moose, mule deer, elk, and antelope;
- in the western states alone, about one-third of the Nation's total coal supply, plus substantial eastern states coal reserves;
- some 35 percent of the Nation's uranium resources;
- nearly 85,000 miles of streams containing trout, salmon and other sport fish;
- approximately 370,000 acres of designated wilderness and over 25 million acres under study for possible designation;
- prospective sources of geothermal energy on over 55 million acres, plus 2 million acres of known geothermal resource areas;
- outdoor recreation opportunities encompassing 15 Wild and Scenic rivers, 21 National Trails, 65,000 miles of roads usable by recreationists, over 4 million acres of lakes and reservoirs, and over 1,500 developed recreation sites;
- more than 350 archaeological and historical sites recorded in the National Register, and more than 1,200 known properties considered to have nationally significant values; and
- the major portion of the undiscovered but geologically predictable domestic deposits of 17 strategic or important minerals.

The Organization

BLM is a four-tiered organization consisting of a headquarters office in Washington D.C., 12 State offices, 58 district offices, and 144 resource areas. There are two special purpose offices: The Denver Service Center, an administrative and technical support facility; and, the Boise Interagency Fire Center, a multi-agency administrative, logistical, and training center for wildfire suppression.

The Human Dimension

The BLM employs 11,500 persons to manage the Public Lands System. Of these, 8,500 are full-time permanent employees and 3,000 are in other–than–full–time status. The skills required to manage this vast estate are as diverse as the land itself: Included are surveyors and engineers, geologists, realty specialists, foresters, range conservationists, botanists, archaeologists, wildlife biologists, firefighters, hydrologists, soil scientists, law enforcement agents and rangers, petroleum and mining engineers, economists, planners, ecologists, recreation specialists, land law and mineral adjudicators, records specialists, and a variety of management and administrative support personnel.

The Financial Balance Sheet

In FY 87, the most recent year for which there are complete figures, the BLM was allocated $659.3 million by Congress to manage the Public Lands System. Revenues from the sale and lease of resources totaled $1.01 billion.

In that same year states were paid $455.3 million as their statutory share of the receipts. In addition, $104.5 million was paid to the counties and the trust territories by the BLM as payments in lieu of taxes on certain Federal lands within their borders.

Where We Are Today - Prelude to the 90's

The BLM is riding the crest of a wave that began over 15 years ago with an unprecedented number of resource and environmental laws, court decisions, and executive orders. In implementing these mandates, BLM is working to transform the public lands system into one that will meet the demands and needs of the Nation in the 21st Century and preserve those national treasures to be found on these lands for public enjoyment.

A host of changes are emerging, nationally and internationally, that will continue to affect and alter the role of the public lands system. A brief sample:

- The aging American society.
- Greater availability of leisure time.
- Trends towards a global economy.
- The maturing of the information society.
- Continued American reliance on foreign energy and mineral sources.
- World-wide changes in the environment (ozone depletion, green house effect, acid rain, desertification and forest depletion).
- Growth of the Pacific Rim economies.

How BLM addresses the role, status and even the identity of these lands within the national framework will have a lasting legacy for many decades to come.

Issues For The 90's

Resource Management and Environmental Protection

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM), the Nation's largest landholder, manages a vast diversity of public resources in America and many of the highest valued. The Bureau must constantly demonstrate the scope of its multiple use mission in administering the development of resources vital to the public's needs, demands, and desires that change through time. While BLM must be flexible in managing public lands, it must also maintain a steady commitment to protecting the special areas and resources it also administers.

The Bureau has the distinction of managing many of the finest national treasures, including a wide range of wilderness areas, spectacular geological formations, world-class archaeological and paleontological sites, outstanding wildlife habitats, areas of great scenic and recreational value, and other priceless resources. These crown jewels of America's public lands must be managed with special sensitivity to protect their values for present and future generations.

The BLM, of all the Federal agencies, must be generalist in nature, prepared to respond to activities associated with the wide range of values found on public lands. The Bureau must address issues concerning minerals, oil and gas, soils, wildlife, grazing, recreation, timber, archaeology, geothermal, threatened and endangered species, and hundreds of other values. BLM's role as steward of the public lands brings with it many responsibilities, but it also affords outstanding opportunities to assume a position of leadership in meeting the resource needs of the American people.

Among the Bureau's vital concerns is the need to manage public resources in a manner that will support rural economies, an increasingly important issue as America builds for the future. Through such means as developing partnerships with local governments and industries, encouraging the growth of private concessions to develop recreational opportunities, protecting natural resources to foster tourism, and facilitating the development of minerals and other economic resources, the BLM is helping to provide jobs and strengthen local, regional and national economies.

The Bureau is committed to doing more than simply reacting to issues as they arise. BLM intends to move forward aggressively to prepare for the rapidly increasing use of the public lands that will occur in the 1990's. Within this context of change, a number of major issues will provide challenges and opportunities for a new Administration. These issues, and recommendations for addressing them, are summarized on the following pages.

Providing for Outdoor Recreation

Issue

Lands administered by BLM receive about 56.4 million visits per year, about twice the recreational use of lands administered by the National Park Service in the West. The value of BLM's Public Lands System in providing for a variety of outdoor recreation experiences is not well understood. It not only reaches the largest number of BLM's public in a positive way, but contributes – sometimes significantly – to local rural economics through tourism expenditures. The Bureau has recently developed a blueprint, known as Recreation 2000: A Strategic Plan, to guide its efforts in accommodating the growing recreation demands on BLM lands and waters. The issue is how can the Bureau best meet existing and projected recreation demand?

Status

From hunting and fishing to off-highway vehicle activities to land sailing to backcountry exploring, the public lands offer a greater diversity of outdoor recreation opportunities than any other lands in the Federal system. These lands contain tremendous geographical variety as well, ranging from Arctic tundra and forested mountains to vast expanses of arid canyon and desert country.

BLM's recreation lands and facilities also offer a different type of recreation experience. Many recreationists seek an alternative to the crowded and confined atmosphere of local, state or national parks and look toward the vastness of the public lands. The variety and multiple use nature of BLM lands are also better suited to handle new forms of recreation. High-tech recreational equipment is often incompatible with management of parks and refuges because of the single use purposes of these areas or the limited types of terrain available. Public lands can also offer an alternative to the establishment of new parks to handle increasing visitation. The development of new facilities in multiple use areas can accommodate overflow from parks and other destinations.

The demand for BLM to do more in outdoor recreation is growing at a tremendous rate. Eight of the 10 states with the highest population growth between 1970 and 1980 were states with substantial acreages of public lands administered by BLM. Annual visitation to those lands has increased nearly three-fold in the past 20 years, and trends show that recreation use on public lands in the West will continue to grow rapidly with the population. Overall recreation demand is expected to increase between 40 and 60 percent by the year 2000.

The majority of older Americans will have more discretionary time for recreation and higher per capita pensions or retirement income that will allow them to travel more extensively. The trend is for retirement age people to move to the South or West. They will remain active and will seek many of the recreation opportunities available on the public lands. Another trend is for people to recreate closer to home. This is of particular importance to BLM, as approximately 45 percent of BLM-administered lands are within a day's drive of the top 16 major population centers in the West.

Americans are also expected to increase their real purchasing power by 40 to 60 percent by 2010. With the predicted rise in the number of older Americans and higher disposable income for all segments of our society, demand for outdoor recreation is certain to increase. This demand is, and will be, as varied as BLM's estate itself. It includes Nationally significant recreational rivers, outstanding wilderness areas in forest and desert ecosystems, campgrounds and picnic sites, off-road vehicle areas, hiking trails and room to escape to an unconfined environment.

The challenge these trends present for the Bureau is to provide greater recreation opportunities and improved resource protection while acting as a fiscally responsible, full-service multiple use agency. Recognizing the importance of its role as one of the major providers of recreation opportunities to the American public, BLM has prepared Recreation 2000, a plan setting forth its commitment to the management of outdoor recreation resources.

Recommendation

That a revitalized approach be advanced to manage the outdoor recreation resource as one of the principle multiple uses of the public lands. Opportunities for accomplishing the major initiatives of Recreation 2000 include:

1. Develop and maintain cooperative relationships and partnerships with tourism bureaus, Federal, State, and local agencies, and the private sector to promote and enhance recreation opportunities.

2. Increase BLM's capability to protect it's nationally significant natural, cultural and scenic resources which provide recreational experiences on public lands. This will require greater effort to provide an on-the-ground presence, establish optimum carrying capacities and monitor use.

3. Increase efforts to provide more visitor information and education on the variety and diversity of public recreation opportunities and the need for resource protection.

4. Increase recreation planning efforts with full public participation to ensure consideration of outdoor recreational values in all multiple use management decisions and to enhance the total resource base.

5. Aggressively pursue land ownership adjustments, improvements in legal and physical access, and other acquisitions to enhance recreation opportunities.

6. Expand efforts to maintain facilities to protect public investments and the health and safety of the visiting public. Provide additional facilities with Federal funding and private sector concessions to meet the growing outdoor recreation demand.

Wildlife and Fisheries Management

Issue

BLM's Public Lands System provides home and habitat for a large array of fish and wildlife species. Many are valuable to the hunter, trapper and fisherman; some are threatened or endangered; most contribute to the pleasure of wildlife viewing; all contribute to the ecological diversity of the Public Lands System.

As with outdoor recreation, the Bureau has devised a comprehensive plan to better protect and manage valuable public wildlife assets. The question is: How can the Bureau best implement Fish and Wildlife 2000: A Plan for the Future to meet its current fish and wildlife program obligations and also ensure that the increasing demand for public lands wildlife and fisheries resources is met?

Status

With more than 273,000,000 acres of land under its administration, the Bureau manages more wildlife habitat than any other agency or group in the United States. The public lands, ranging from seemingly barren plains to mature Douglas fir forests, from searing desert to Arctic tundra, is seasonal or yearlong habitat for more than 3,000 species of mammals, birds, reptiles, fish and amphibians, as well as untold numbers of plant and invertebrate species.

Represented among the many animal species present on the public lands are all the major North American big game species and most of the small game species, as well as many warm water and cold water sport fishes. The vast majority of wildlife and fish species, however, are not used in the consumptive sense (i.e., hunting and fishing), but are nonetheless important components of the public lands wildlife resource. Among this last group of species are over 45 plant and animal species listed as threatened or endangered under the Endangered Species Act, and more than 870 species that are candidates for listing.

Public lands wildlife and fisheries resources are important to the American economy. For instance, during the 1985-1986 season, over 5 million hunter use days occurred, with primary benefits valued at $145,000,000. Over 3 million days with over $55,000,000 in primary benefits were spent fishing. Wildlife also contributed to enjoyment of the public lands for millions of campers, hikers, photographers and other users. These "nonconsumptive" users spent over 230 million hours on the public lands and waters during the 1985-1986 season. Primary benefits arising from this group of public lands users are estimated to have been $200,000,000. As dollars spent on fisheries or wildlife-related recreation move through the economies of local communities, their contribution multiplies to increase their impact.

While the presence of wildlife and fisheries on the public lands has economic and aesthetic values, the work done to ensure their presence on those lands has other intrinsic values. For instance, riparian/wetland habitat improvements for wildlife also improve water flow regimes and water quality for downstream users. Vegetative manipulation projects intended to improve big game forage also improve livestock forage and watershed conditions.It is becoming more difficult to maintain or enhance fish and wildlife resource values on the public lands. The public land states have experienced rapid population growth over the last 15 years, a trend that is expected to continue. This population growth has placed heavy demands on all public land resources. In recreation alone, visitation has increased nearly three-fold over the last 20 years, with an estimated 56 million visitor days now occurring each year. Growth in outdoor recreation is expected to continue, increasing as much as 60 percent by the year 2000. Much of this growth in outdoor recreation has been and will continue to be related to wildlife, either through the direct consumptive use of wildlife and fish or through nonconsumptive uses such as photography or bird watching. The value of any trip to the public lands is enhanced by the presence of wildlife.

Responding to this atmosphere of growing demand for public lands resources, especially fish and wildlife, the BLM has developed a strategic plan to help direct and focus the fish and wildlife program through the year 2000. Through this plan, the BLM is identifying opportunities to meet the fisheriesand wildlife-related challenges of the next decade. Arising through the program emphasis surrounding the development of the strategic plan are a number of specific programs guided by their own long-range plans. Among these are habitat management plans for desert bighorn sheep, anadromous fisheries, raptors, desert tortoises, and waterfowl. Other habitat management plans are in the early developmental stages.

The purpose of these individual plans is to identify and provide for the development of opportunities to enhance specific fisheries or wildlife resources. All arise from concerns expressed by the public. Some, like the bighorn sheep plan, are BLM initiatives; others, such as the waterfowl habitat plan, resulted from national or international concerns for specific resources. The BLM is also carrying out an aggressive wetland or riparian habitat management and improvement program, which is to be implemented through strategies developed at the State Office level.

Recommendation

That the following major initiatives and goals of Fish and Wildlife 2000 be carried out:

1. Ensure optimum populations and a natural abundance and diversity of wildlife resources on public lands by restoring, maintaining, and enhancing habitat conditions through coordination with other programs, with the States, by management initiatives, and through direct habitat improvement projects.

2. Ensure that big game/upland game species on the public lands are provided habitat of sufficient quantity and quality to sustain identifiable economic and/or social contributions to the American people.

3. Help perpetuate a diversity and abundance of waterfowl for the Nation by managing the wetlands and other habitats on the public lands that are of importance to the maintenance of this international resource.

4. Provide suitable habitat conditions for birds of prey on public lands through the conservation and management of essential habitat components, including habitat for prey species.

5. Manage riparian areas to achieve a healthy and productive condition for long-term benefits and values, in concert with the range and watershed programs.

6. Provide and enhance the fisheries potential of anadromous fish streams in the Pacific Coast drainages so as to further contribute to the public uses and enjoyment and to the economic stability of coastal communities and to the recreational and commercial fishing industries.

7. Manage habitat for resident fish species that spend all or part of their life cycles in public land waters and are of high economic, social, or scientific value to local communities or the Nation. This includes both warm and cold water resident species, such as bass, rainbow and cutthroat trout, and fish in the desert Southwest.

8. Increase populations of threatened and endangered (T/E) plants, fish and wildlife on lands managed by BLM and restore species and populations to historic ranges, consistent with BLM land use plans, after consultation with Federal and State wildlife agencies.

9. Manage the habitat of candidate species to maintain populations of plants and animals at a level which will avoid endangering the species and/or the need to list the species as T/E by either State or Federal governments.

Wilderness Review Process

Issue

The Bureau's Wilderness Review Process – inventory, study, reporting – has progressed on schedule over the past decade and is now nearing completion. The new Administration will be responsible for transmitting proposed wilderness legislation to Congress for all BLM lands under wilderness study. Until Congress acts, all wilderness study areas (WSAs) are to be managed to preserve their wildland characteristics. The question needing immediate resolution is whether the existing process should be continued as scheduled to facilitate completion of this study of BLM wildlands?

Status

The Federal Land Policy and Management Act requires the Secretary of the Interior to complete review of the public lands for wilderness potential and report the findings to the President by October 21, 1991. The Secretary's report for each state will include: the BLM's final suitability report; final environmental impact statement including analysis of public comments; public hearing records; mineral evaluations conducted by the Geological Survey and the Bureau of Mines on any area recommended as suitable for wilderness; a wilderness study report containing summary information on each wilderness study area (WSA), including the rationale; a record of decision for the recommendations, and draft legislation to implement the recommendations.

The current process calls for all state reports to be "packaged" on a statewide basis for transmittal to the President and to the Congress. The schedule for completion of the statewide packages, from BLM to the Secretary, is as follows:

Alaska	1989
Arizona	April 1991
California	January 1989
Colorado	September 1990
Idaho	April 1990
Montana	September 1990
Nevada	April 1990
New Mexico	September 1989
Oregon	September 1990
Utah	April 1991
Wyoming	April 1990

The Secretary is generally expected to take two to three months to complete review of the packages and prepare final recommendations. The President is required to send his recommendations to Congress within two years from receipt of each statewide package report from the Secretary.

To date, approximately $100 million has been spent on the wilderness review process. Delays in the schedule could increase costs and extend restricted uses on those lands under review which are ultimately deemed not suitable for wilderness designation. The Bureau's studies encompass 855 areas, located in 11 western states, totalling approximately 25,000,000 acres.

On a nationwide basis, BLM is involved with approximately 75 separate study efforts, including eight studies where both BLM and Forest Service lands are involved. Some studies, such as New Mexico, Oregon, and Utah, were accomplished on a statewide basis, with only one environmental impact statement being prepared for each state. Other studies were done on an individual or grouping of WSAs.

Approximately 55 of the BLM studies and joint Forest Service/BLM studies have had final environmental impact statements filed with the Environmental Protection Agency. By the end of calendar year 1989 the remaining final environmental impact statements, with the exception of two statewide environmental impact statements for BLM areas and one joint Forest Service/BLM area study, will be completed.

The preliminary BLM recommendations for wilderness in the studies indicate that approximately 43% of the WSA acreage, 10,500,000 acres, is being recommended suitable for wilderness designation. The remaining 14,500,000, acres are considered non-suitable for wilderness because of marginal wilderness characteristics, manageability and/or conflicting resource values and would be released for full multiple use management purposes.

Sections 202 and 603 of Federal Land Policy and Management Act describe the overall wilderness study program requirements, set deadlines for reporting wilderness recommendations, require studies to be conducted, and specify how the lands under wilderness review will be managed. In fulfilling these requirements, BLM has (1) inventoried the public lands for wilderness characteristics; (2) protected areas undergoing wilderness review; (3) analyzed identified wilderness study areas, and (4) is currently in the process of completing studies and reporting suitable or non-suitable recommendations to the Secretary of the Interior.

BLM conducted its inventory of lands between 1977-1980 to determine the presence or absence of wilderness characteristics. Public participation occurred throughout the process and more than 100,000 comments were received. After the inventory, BLM designated areas having basic characteristics as WSAs. After resolution of appeals and court cases on a number of inventory units the Environmental Impact Statements (EISs) were started on approximately 25,000,000 acres in 855 WSAs.

The current process is ultimately designed to preserve high quality areas as part of a national wilderness system and to contribute to the inventory of our national treasures. Major reasons why the current schedule should be adhered to include:

1. The majority of EISs have been completed reflecting extensive public input.

2. The schedule conforms with established and published wilderness review procedures.

3. Federal Land Policy and Management Act reporting deadline of 1991 will be met.

4. The BLM process fully meets the technical requirements of the Wilderness Act.

5. The new Administration will have full opportunity to review field recommendations and to formulate its own proposal to Congress.

Recommendation

That the wilderness and recommendation process should proceed as currently scheduled with each State's package of recommendations going forward independently on its own schedule.

Land Exchanges

Issue

Due to the nature of settlement, claims and other public land disposals and reserves over the past two hundred years, the lands retained under BLM stewardship are more an accident of history than an orderly, planned system of land tenure. Land exchanges are a significant management tool to improve on-the-ground management of public lands, to protect high value public resources now in private hands, and to consolidate all ownerships. Should the Bureau expand its land exchange and acquisition programs to enhance management of public lands?

Status

BLM uses land exchanges as a management tool to improve on-the-ground management of public lands. The need for ownership adjustments continues to outpace funds, but progress with land exchanges in recent years has been substantial and impressive. The number of exchanges completed and the acreage acquired over the last few years has been the greatest in BLM's history.

BLM's exchange program, under Section 206 of Federal Land Policy and Management Act, consists of exchanges with States, with private individuals and corporations. State exchanges block up scattered State sections into larger units to eliminate inholdings in well-blocked BLM areas. State exchanges provide an excellent opportunity to adjust land ownership patterns for more efficient management and can enhance land use and revenue opportunities.

In recent years, numerous private exchanges have been initiated and completed. These exchanges generally transfer developable public lands or commodity producing public lands into private ownership in exchange for private land with significant resource values suitable for public ownership and BLM management. For example, exchanges have transferred considerable amounts of developable coal into private ownership in exchange for land with significant public values. Private exchanges have also been used by BLM to solve significant problems such as providing convenient access to BLM lands for water-based recreation. The Bureau has also acquired critical wildlife habitat and other types of high value lands such as riparian areas.

The land exchange effort has generated considerable Congressional interest. The Exchange Facilitation Act (P.L. 100-409) represents the general Congressional approach to improving exchange processing. Major provisions include mandatory appraisal arbitration, mandatory appraisal scheduling, simultaneous title transfer, cost sharing, adjustment of relative values, exchanges based on approximately equal values, and segregation from appropriation. Congress has also passed exchange acts to complete specific exchanges.

Successful BLM exchange programs have almost always involved several key ingredients; namely, (1) a good planning base graphically depicting retention/disposal areas to guide BLM and other affected party actions, (2) a use of facilitation tools such as the exchange pooling concept, proponents, cooperative agreements or MOUs with states, large landowners, State Historic Preservation Officers, or other involved entities needed to expedite and complete the exchange process, and (3) probably the most important ingredient, managerial and agency commitment.

BLM's exchange efforts are constrained because funding is not always readily available to work on a specific proposal when a proponent is willing to exchange. However, exchange proponents are sometimes willing to help share processing costs to overcome time delays. Appraisals and cultural resource inventories are frequently provided by the exchange proponent to help defray processing costs. All such work supplied by an exchange proponent must be done to BLM standards, and approved at the appropriate management level. At this time, these services are provided by the proponent without compensation.

Cost reimbursement is routinely required for processing other agency exchanges. Unlike BLM benefitting exchanges where the proponent provides only work, other benefitting agencies pay for BLM's processing time and are responsible for supplying the necessary reports and other documents needed to process an exchange. BLM's costs associated with processing another agency's exchange proposal are held to an absolute minimum to ensure that BLM benefitting exchanges can be processed within funding and manpower constraints.

Recommendation

That exchanges benefitting management of the public lands should be a priority effort. The number of other agency exchanges considered and completed should be of secondary priority. Exchange efforts should be increased, and more BLM personnel should work on exchanges and other methods of land acquisition. Acreages transferred into private ownership or acquired would increase and more emphasis would be placed on completing State exchanges. At the same time, other BLM realty activities should be maintained to provide an adequate level of public service and support to other demands on the BLM landbase.

Rangeland Management

Issue

No Federal or State agency manages more rangeland than BLM. Encompassing over 162 million acres of public land the nation's rangelands are a vast source of renewable resources. Among many other values the range supports about 4 million head of livestock which is an important element in the economic well-being of many rural communities and the almost 20,000 operators who depend at one time or another on public land grazing for their livelihood.

BLM is principally seen by the public as manager of the public rangelands, and the gauge of BLM's success often depends on perception of range condition. Understanding and agreement on BLM's objectives for range management and how its condition is to be rated are essential for public approval.

Within the public rangelands, riparian areas are generally the most environmentally important. Although BLM has done much to improve these areas, more can and must be done. Additionally, BLM and private individuals have large investments in range improvements, and methods need to be found to maintain and protect these investments, as well as ensure an overall funding strategy for new improvements.

The Bureau's present policy requires monitoring rangelands for the purpose of implementing grazing decisions. This effort has been costly and controversial. Is there a better comprehensive strategy to implement grazing decisions and evaluate monitoring costs relative to allocations?

Status

One overriding consideration of managing public rangelands is that they are biological systems, yet are viewed by many users and the public as individual isolated programs; each program having it's own objectives, funding and constituents. Range condition becomes not a function of the health of the overall biological system, but rather fragmented concerns about livestock, wildlife, water quality, soils, productivity and plant composition.

The Bureau has had difficulty demonstrating the effectiveness of rangeland management objectives using the current range condition rating system. The system evaluates range condition in comparison to the potential natural community of a given ecological site. However, this often has little bearing on how well that site meets the multiple use objectives of the management plan for the area. A site rated excellent from an ecological standpoint may not be what is desired. The Bureau needs to consider a more meaningful rating system keyed to management objectives.

Improvement and restoration of rangeland riparian areas is one of the most important national conservation issues for the public ranges. These bands of green vegetation along the banks of streams, springs and lakes represent only about 1 percent of BLM managed rangeland, but they have ecological importance far beyond their relatively small acreage. They support a greater quantity and diversity of vegetation than adjoining land. They act as sponges, raising the water table in the surrounding area, and they remove sediment from water, helping to purify it. They dissipate the energy of floodwaters and reduce flood peaks.

Riparian areas also provide precious food, water, shade and cover for animals, often in areas that would otherwise be inhospitable.

The Bureau has worked diligently to improve the condition of its rangelands, and to develop new strategies for riparian and wetlands in concert with local users in specific areas. Examples exist where this partnership has led to outstanding improvement of riparian/wetland areas. But clearer management objectives, acceptable measures of progress, and better skills and processes to achieve cooperation on specific projects may well be needed.

Under existing policy, the Bureau assigns maintenance responsibility of range improvement projects, to the extent possible, to the primary beneficiaries of improvement projects. This policy makes available the maximum amount of funds for new project development and reconstruction. The majority of the structural improvements funded through range improvement funds have assigned the maintenance responsibilities to the livestock permittee. Bureau-wide concern exists that required maintenance is not being performed in a manner that will maintain many projects in a satisfactory condition. Additonally, BLM is not able to conduct project inspections and maintenance at an adequate level.

In 1982, the Bureau issued the "Final Rangeland Improvement Policy" developed in part as a result of the Western Governor's Conference recommendations that more range improvement funds be spent for on-the-ground work. The funding policy excludes use of improvement funds for project planning and maintenance. Neither adequate maintenance inspections nor adequate maintenance is occurring in many areas to maintain a substantial public investment. Adequate funding to perform maintenance does not exist. Current policy relies on the benefitting activity to fund the planning, environmental work, and maintenance associated with improvement fund projects, or the primary beneficiary of the project (permittees, etc.) to perform the maintenance.

Over a five-year period, funding equal to one half of the grazing fees generated from any one District are returned to that District for range improvement work. Over time, the inability to shift funds from one District to another results in some Districts being overfunded and others unable to carry out effective programs.

Under current policy, after a land use plan and an environmental impact statement are prepared on a grazing allotment(s), a Record of Decision and range program summary is promulgated, but the level of grazing is not typically changed. The Bureau monitors the situation to see if the rangeland objectives in the Land Use Plan are being met. If monitoring indicates changes are needed, the Bureau will make changes within 5 years of the Record of Decision. A court decision in Reno confirmed this process, but it also further committed BLM to both monitor and make adjustments within 5 years. BLM also is faced with priorities for conducting monitoring across three categories of allotments: (I) allotments in basically poor condition where intensive work is needed, (M) allotments which are basically in fair condition and work is needed to maintain that condition and (C) allotments which are small, scattered parcels where work is of a custodial nature.

Two major questions surface:

- What does BLM need to do to get ready for implementing decisions as a result of monitoring?

- Is BLM making an adequate investment in monitoring and at what cost to other rangeland program components?

As required by the Public Rangelands Improvement Act (PRIA) the Secretaries of Agriculture and Interior submitted to Congress an evaluation of grazing fee options and recommendations on a formula to be used in 1986 and subsequent years. Congress did not make a final decision on the evaluation and during FY 1986, the Secretaries, under Executive Order, continued determining the annual grazing fee by using the formula established by the PRIA act with a minimum fee of $1.35 per animal unit month.

Grazing fees become a focal point for conflicting objectives: (1) the maintenance of rural economies which rely heavily on ranching, (2) the use of rangelands for interests other than livestock, and (3) the fair economic return to the treasury for use and consumption of public resources. Historically, resolution of these objectives is accomplished outside BLM.

Recommendation

That the major focus of review on a grazing policy should be to develop an improved and comprehensive strategy to implement grazing decisions and monitor costs. Range conditions, ratings, riparian enhancement, maintenance, improvements, and grazing fees are necessary parts of the comprehensive strategy. Of equal importance is implementing a grazing decision strategy beneficial to the range land values and acceptable to the public, users, and elected officials.

Protection and Management of Wild Horses and Burros

Issue

Perhaps no other program in the Bureau is as emotionally charged as that dealing with the wild free-roaming horses and burros on the Public Lands System. Passed in 1971 without one dissenting vote in Congress, the preamble to the Wild Free-Roaming Horse and Burro Act is illustrative of the public's interest and expectations.

> "That Congress finds and declares that wild free-roaming horses and burros are living symbols of the historic and pioneer spirit of the West; that they contribute to the diversity of life forms within the Nation and enrich the lives of the American people; and that these horses and burros are fast disappearing from the American scene. It is the policy of Congress that wild free-roaming horses and burros shall be protected from capture, branding, harassment, or death; and to accomplish this they are to be considered in the area where presently found, as an integral part of the natural system of the public lands."

The key issue is whether the Bureau's existing policies and program optimally promotes the intent and objectives of this legislation.

Status

Since wild horses and burros have no natural predators, the protection of the 1971 Act allowed populations to grow dramatically in the 1970's and early 1980's to the detriment of the rangelands on which they live.

The major program emphasis has been gathering excess animals and trying to place them with private owners through the Bureau's "Adopt-a-Horse" program. This program is necessary to balance the populations with the capacity of the range to sustain other wildlife and livestock.

The "Adopt-a-Horse" program has reduced the numbers of wild horses and burros on public lands from a peak of approximately 65,000 animals, to a current population estimate of 42,000 animals. The goal for sustainable horse and burro populations on the public lands has been identified at approximately 30,000 animals. At present funding levels for the program, the Bureau estimates that the 30,000 target will be achieved in FY 1991.

The emphasis on adoption has, in many instances, resulted in negative public reaction and publicity (including litigation) regarding BLM's activities. This public reaction has focused primarily upon such things as: 1) gathering techniques and philosophy; 2) adoption methods for excess animals, particularly fee-waiver adoptions for large numbers of animals to a single adoptee; 3) contract holding facilities, where large numbers of animals are corralled; and 4) destruction of old, sick or lame animals. All of these concerns ultimately relate to the maintenance of viable populations on the native range and the humane treatment of captured horses and burros. As BLM brings populations to management levels and improves the adoption rate for excess animals, it is time to formulate management approaches that focus on the well-being of in-place herds of 30,000 animals and the 34 million acres of their habitat.

Management and policy considerations include:

- Continue a modest gathering effort to maintain sustainable populations.

- Develop a more complete data base, including more frequent and more accurate census data as a base for on-the-ground management plans.

- Develop Herd Management Area plans to insure healthy gene pools and quality animals and habitat improvement projects, especially water developments, to better maintain these symbols of the historic West.

- Formally establish wild horse and burro ranges and sanctuaries. The range aspect of this option will help to focus public interest and attention on the Bureau's management and allow the Bureau to demonstrate management abilities on highly visible areas. The Sanctuary aspect of the option will provide an avenue for disposal of unadoptable excess animals. In addition, the maintenance of these animals under semi-wild conditions would gain public support and commitment.

- Improve and enhance current adoption marketing strategy to better ensure humane care of horses and burros through private maintenance.

  BLM's Eastern States Office's wild horse and burro adoption program demonstrates what can be done with an aggressive marketing program. Using 3 full time adoption centers and a proposed 39 satellite centers by next year, Eastern States will place as many as 6,000 animals. The adoption centers are backed with a combination of media coverage, contacts with local county agents, paid advertising, and special events, such as horse shows featuring only adopted animals.

Recommendation

That support be focused on a new, proactive charter for BLM's Wild Horse and Burro Program which will focus on the management and perpetuation of wild and free-roaming herds to end the controversy of the past and foster greater public support in the future.

O&C Policy

Issue

Should the policies governing the management of Western Oregon timber lands be reaffirmed or changed so as to govern planning now in progress?

Current Bureau policy is to update timber management plans at least every 10 years. This permits the timely and systematic incorporation of new information, technologies, and land use allocations into the plans. The Bureau is now in the process of developing new land use plans, called Resource Management Plans (RMPs) for lands in western Oregon. The plan completion and implementation target is October 1990. Five district-wide plans, one for each western Oregon district, will be prepared concurrently.

The Oregon planning effort began with initial public scoping in 1986. After issue identification, the Bureau developed planning criteria for the process. The centerpiece of those criteria is State Director guidance which was circulated in its proposed form for public review in May 1988. By the end of 1988 resource inventories will be completed. Early in 1989 each district will have pulled together its baseline data, utilizing a geographic information system, in an analysis of the management situation.

Preparation of draft RMP and Environmental Impact Statements (EISs) will be accomplished for Oregon by October 1989, when they will be released for public review and comment. A four month comment period is contemplated, followed by development of proposed plans, to be published in mid-1990, along with final EISs. Implementation of the new plans with sustained yield annual timber sale quantities is scheduled to begin in fiscal year 1991 (October 1990).

Status

Oregon public lands support some of the most productive forests in the world and also include wildlife habitat, streams with resident and migratory fisheries, designated natural areas, and opportunities for many recreational activities. Under present forest management plans, BLM sells approximately 1.2 billion board feet of timber annually.

Numerous federal laws, Executive or Secretarial orders and Bureau policies exist which influence the current Western Oregon land use and timber management planning process for the 1990's. Also, other federal policies on water quality, wetlands, floodplains, T & E wildlife and plant habitats, cultural resources, strategic minerals and other resource values must be considered in developing the preferred alternative. Since successive legal interpretations of the O&C Act of 1937 have consistently established a dominant timber use management scheme, it will be important to reaffirm the existing policy statement or refine one to guide the present resource management planning effort on O&C lands.

The existing policy allows a certain degree of flexibility with multiple use options. Basically, the policy guides the final land use allocations and decisions. The present plans for the 1980's provide protection for areas of critical environmental concern, research natural areas, outstanding natural areas, cultural areas, botanical sites, protection of federally listed threatened and endangered species such as bald eagles, and protection of problem reforestation and fragile sites. The plans also provide for visual resource management, older forest retention, riparian zone protection, recreation/educational areas, and protection of unique habitats. In total, eleven different multiple use values are considered and offered protection. This results in protection of water quality, fishery habitat, wildlife habitat, ecosystem diversity, and visual quality. In fact, 20% of the BLM commercial timberlands in western Oregon are reserved from timber harvest for these purposes. Thus present plans provide for the dominant production of timber in addition to numerous other multiple use values and benefits.

In many areas in western Oregon, the only remaining old growth forests are on BLM and US Forest Service lands, an issue of immense concern to the public. Current timber management plans schedule the conversion of many of these remaining old growth forests into young thrifty forests. This will reduce the total amount of old growth habitat presently available for animal and plant species associated with this habitat. The present spotted owl controversy is a symptom of the old growth forest concern, and has resulted in numerous protests, appeals and lawsuits. The Bureau is now enjoined by the 9th Circuit Court from selling any timber where such sales would permit the logging of Douglas fir timber older than 200 years of age.

Changes in the current annual timber sale level of 1.2 billion board feet would affect logging, manufacturing, and support jobs. BLM has historically provided approximately 15% of the timber supply in western Oregon. This percentage varies locally but is much greater in some communities which are highly dependent on a steady supply of BLM timber sale offerings for their economic stability. For a one million board foot change in annual harvest, the total change in employment for the region would be seven direct timber harvest and manufacturing jobs and 14 support or secondary jobs.

Dollar receipts from timber sale offerings are extremely important to the 18 O&C counties. These counties receive 50% of the gross timber sale revenues, with the other 50% going to the Federal treasury. Changes in timber sale receipts directly affect local school districts, road departments, county courts, and the general county infrastructure.

BLM manages the public lands and resources of western Oregon according to the guiding principles of two major pieces of national legislation - The O&C Sustained Yield Act of 1937 and the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976.

The O&C Act states that lands classified as valuable for timber are to be managed for permanent forest production and the timber on such lands is to be cut, sold, and removed in conformity with the principles of sustained yield forest management. The stated purpose of such timber harvesting is to provide a permanent source of timber supply, protect watersheds, regulate stream flow and to contribute to the economic stability of local communities and industries. Over successive administrations, this act has been reaffirmed by several solicitor's opinions as a dominant use act in favor of timber production.

In addition, the O&C timberlands may be managed for other purposes specifically provided for by federal statute such as implementation of the Clean Water Act and protection of federal listed threatened and endangered species. The multiple use provisions of Federal Land Policy and Management Act do not change the dominant use management scheme provided for under the O&C Act. The limitation contained in Section 701 (b) of Federal Land Policy and Management Act provides that the O&C Act prevails regarding the management of the timber resources on the O&C lands. However, the Federal Land Policy and Management Act is especially important for its emphasis on a land use planning process as the basis for land management decisions and its reiteration of the principles of multiple use and sustained yield.

Recommendation

That existing O&C Policy be reaffirmed or modified prior to the formulation of the preferred alternatives for each of the five EISs (June 1989). The policy now in place is well understood by constituents including its application to O&C forest management which provides a modest degree of flexibility and management and is supported by past legal opinions.

Forestland – Woodland Management

Issue

Both internally and externally, the management philosophy for forestland outside of the O&C lands of western Oregon has been an issue. During FY 1988, an analysis of this issue was conducted which looks at managing these lands based on a forestland ecosystem basis for multiple-uses, managing them based mainly on their production of forest or woodland products, or managing them in a custodial manner while only responding to cost effective demands for products. This analysis and other studies has focused on the question of what the Bureau's policy should be for management of forest lands and woodlands outside of the O&C?

Status

Forests and woodlands outside western Oregon are managed according to separate policies. The public domain forest management program outside the O&C is currently subdivided into: the commercial forest land program, the woodlands program and the Alaska forest lands program.

Commercial forest land is available for the production and sale of timber as raw material to mills and other end users. Commercial forest land has an allowable annual harvest of about 88 million board feet. Some sales are sold even though costs exceed estimated returns. Such sales are usually held in areas where the timber has been infected by insects and/or disease, where local demand requires the timber, or to facilitate other activities such as rights-of-way. The major elements are timber sale planning, sale preparation, and sale administration.

Forest development is an integral part of the commercial forest land program which provides silvicultural practices, such as reforestation, needed to achieve sustained yield and support the allowable harvest. An analysis of forest development needs has indicated that backlogs of reforestation and timber stand improvement have developed through the years.

The primary focus of the woodlands program differs substantially from that of the commercial timber program. Woodlands are managed for a wider variety of uses including the production of those types of products that are generally purchased by individuals for their own consumption. In some areas where demand for these products is high, they are sold to small businesses that resell to individuals.

A number of policy options exist that are important to the public domain forest management program. For example, a policy of forest land management would recognize the need to manage them as biological systems for the full variety of multiple use such as maintaining forest species providing commercial forest products, wildlife habitat, recreation, soils and watershed, while maintaining the integrity of the ecosystem. This policy, would require a change in current policy application and attitudes and would result in a more fully coordinated multiple use program.

Annual harvests of forest products would be based on resource needs for timber, wildlife, insects, and disease control, recreation, etc., and also take into account local economic conditions and demands. Harvest of forest products would be the tool to manage the ecosystem for the desired condition.

Forest land management should generate broader based support from the public, environmental groups, wildlife groups, and adjacent land owners who are increasingly interested in the management of forest lands for other than just commercial timber harvest. Forest products would be provided, and use by recreationists, wildlife, etc., would be enhanced. The overriding commitment to annual harvest would not be the primary priority. The goal would be to maintain forest lands in an optimum condition.

This policy could be perceived as not providing sufficient timber for local consumption in a small number of instances. Also it would be more difficult to justify the program from a cost/revenue basis.

Under the policy of present management, the Bureau would continue to manage forested areas as commercial forestland or woodland. This policy would require no changes in procedures, but it also would do nothing to resolve the issue of having the program judged on the basis of revenue it produces or the increasing expectation of the public wanting to maintain forest lands for other than commercial timber production.

This policy would continue the long-standing forest management principle of sustained yield and justification of funding requests based on allowable harvest. It also provides some assurance to local mills and communities of BLM's intent to sell timber. Conversely, it would continue the impression that meeting the allowable harvest is an overriding consideration in forest management.

A policy of custodial management would reduce forest management actions to the minimum needed to respond to public demand for forest products. Actions on these demands would only occur if benefits exceeded costs and no conflicts with other resource values surfaced. Allowed harvest would not be established.

The ability to respond to public demand would require some level of funding and availability of professional expertise. The amount of either would be hard to project while being in a reactive mode. This policy would not provide for a minimum level of stewardship and may not be in conformance with Federal Land Policy and Management Act.

Regardless of the volume of products sold, the responsibility to provide a level of stewardship management remains. This responsibility consists of providing basic planning, research, protection of the timber resource (including trespass abatement), insect and disease control, and prevention of permanent impairment of the productivity of the land. It involves a certain level of inventory and meeting the public demand for information. It also requires the BLM to respond to the need for timber removal for rights-of-way or other activities which are incidental to forest management.

That a policy of forest land management would recognize the need to manage them as biological systems for the full variety of multiple use such as maintaining forest species providing commercial forest products, wildlife habitat, recreation, soils and watershed, while maintaining the integrity of the ecosystem.

Toxic Materials Management

Issue

The regulation, control and containment of substances which pose a threat to human health and safety (toxic materials) is of growing national concern. As a major public land use authorizing agency, BLM faces many toxic material issues. The Toxic Materials Management Program is still developing within the BLM, but its potential impact and magnitude is staggering. For example, four known sites on BLM-administered lands are known to be contaminated and an additional 296 sites are suspected of being contaminated. The average cost to clean up a single contaminated site can run as high as $8 to $25 million.

In addition to known sites, the Bureau averages 50 emergency responses per year requiring the agency to prepare worst case analyses, bring in State or Environmental Protection Agency tactical teams, take necessary measures to protect public health and safety, and contract for removal of the hazardous wastes involved.

How can the Bureau best manage its obligations and responsibilities under various toxic waste legislative mandates and what should be the proper Bureau posture and capabilities to control and respond to toxic waste incidents?

Status

The BLM, its personnel, and public land users are subject to a variety of laws governing toxic wastes including: the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act of 1976, as amended by the Hazardous and Solid Waste Amendments of 1984, and the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act of 1980, as amended by the Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act of 1986.

One of the Bureau's areas of concern is the potential for both air, ground and water contamination from hazardous materials having been deposited in Bureau-authorized sanitary landfills. In the 1950's, common trash was being dumped indiscriminately on public lands near many western communities. To remedy this, the Bureau entered into a cooperative program as a good neighbor with towns and counties to authorize sanitary landfill sites under the reduced fee authority of the Recreation and Public Purposes Act. Since 1954, 172 authorized sites have been used and closed. There are also 337 authorized sites presently operating, for a total of 509 sites. Some additional sites may also have been used in trespass. Although lease terms and stipulations limited the use of such sites to deposition of common household wastes, hazardous materials have been deposited at some of them. The remnants of illegal drug labs pose another serious threat. The chemicals used in these labs include carcinogens, poisons, caustics and acids and are usually discarded in common trash bags. Other forms of indiscriminate dumping of toxic (and non-toxic) waste on the public lands are not uncommon.

In addition to landfill and indiscriminate dumping, other Bureau programs are directly influenced by numerous environmental laws and implementing regulations, which involve the deposit or release of chemical compounds. For example:

Program	Issues
Lands and Realty	Authorized landfill leases, contaminated exchange lands, PCBs on BLM rights-of-way.
Minerals resources	Toxic or radioactive mine wastes, wastes underground injection, cyanide use in gold extraction.
Forestry and Range	Vegetation and insect management involving use of herbicide/pesticides.
Soil, Water and Air	Water/air quality, point and non-point source discharges.
Law Enforcement	Illegal drug laboratories, midnight dumping of unknown or known toxic materials.
Fire Management	Hazard recognition and risk assess ment; release of gasses and particulates by prescribed burns.
Engineering	Leaking underground storage tanks, PCBs.
Property Management	PCBs and asbestos, waste recycling, small quantity generation of shop/lab wastes.

The Bureau's toxic materials program is evolving and maturing; agency appropriations and funding to field offices have substantially increased from $1.3 million in FY 1985 to $12.4 million in FY 1989; proactive program development efforts including manual/handbook development and employee training are underway; and, the experience/skill levels of mostly collateral duty toxic waste employees is increasing. Through contracting at the national level, significant progress has been made in reducing the number of BLM sites pending preliminary assessments/site investigations on the Federal Facilities Docket. A landfill compliance audit program will be implemented in FY 1989 and the Recreation and Public Purposes Act amendment recently passed by Congress will also be implemented.

The FY 1988 appropriations act required BLM to "initiate a comprehensive review and evaluation of its (hazardous materials management) program by the National Academy of Engineering/National Academy of Sciences." This review is on-going and is being closely monitored by the Bureau.

Major issues and strategies being addressed by the study include:

- Employee and public safety.
- Nondiscretionary use of public lands for mining and other purposes with attendant liabilities accruing to the United States.
- Defining the roles of regulatory agencies vis-a-vis BLM's statutory authorization of the use of public lands to third parties, and the bonding of lessees/permittees/others engaged in high risk liability uses of public lands.

It is anticipated that the evaluation will be conducted throughout FY 1989, thus providing the new Administration an excellent opportunity to participate and influence the character and future direction of the Bureau's program.

Given the vast estate BLM administers and the equally large potential need for emergency response to toxic materials incidents such as "midnight dumping", special accounts and enforcement personnel to deal with such situations are worthy of policy consideration. This would enable the Bureau to better address situations of an emergency nature, especially for public health and safety, in a manner that now exists for wildfire, floods and other natural disasters. BLM could furnish similar support to other DOI Bureaus.

Recommendation

That the directed study by the National Academy of Engineering/ National Academy of Sciences be closely monitored to ensure that recommendations are workable and that they put the Bureau in the best position possible to discharge its toxic materials responsibilities for the good of the environment and public health and safety. Additionally, that consideration be given to a special emergency account, along with increased enforcement personnel to better discourage "midnight dumping" and to permit immediate response to serious, life threatening incidents.

Mining Law Administration

Issue

The Bureau of Land Management has overall responsibility for administering the 1872 Mining Law. Currently, this involves the administration of about 1.2 million mining claims on Federal lands nationwide. Active claims contribute to a large portion of America's hardrock mineral production such as precious metals and other metallics without payments to the United States for such mineral extractions. The Mining Law was implemented to promote the orderly development of the mineral resources in the western United States. Although considered highly successful to that end, recent interest has arisen from the public and Congress to make major changes to the mining claim location system set up by that law.

What new policy positions could the Bureau take in administering minerals that would provide for more equitable use of public land resources? If reform of 1872 Mining Law is contemplated, what are potential areas for change?

Status

In June 1987, the House of Representatives held an oversight hearing on the Mining Law before the Subcommittee on Mining and Natural Resources of the Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs. This may signal renewed interest in making changes to the Mining Law. Whatever changes do occur, it will be important to retain incentives for industry to explore for and mine minerals on public lands, while balancing this need with sufficient controls for sound land use management.

Pressures for mining law reform have resulted from legal ambiguities causing thousands of cases of fraud and abuses to the intent of the Mining Law. A highly visible minority of participating individuals or groups locate mining claims in bad faith, using public lands for purposes (such as residences) other than those related to mining.

Although prohibited by Public Law 167, new mining claims are located each year for "common varieties" of sand, stone, gravel, pumice, pumicite, cinder and clay. Claimants thereby circumvent the legal requirements to purchase such minerals from the Federal Government. BLM must presume these mining claims are valid until they are declared invalid through proper administrative or legal channels. In the interim, trespass situations continue. Fraud or abuses of the law inhibit access to, or exploration for, mineral resources by legitimate mineral prospectors.

Fraud and abuse of the Mining Law constrain BLM's abilities to manage surface resources overlying questionable mining claims and block other, legitimate uses of the public lands. In some cases, for example, individuals aware of impending transfers or releases of public lands have rushed out and staked claims on those lands with the intention of blocking the transfer or lease until their claims are purchased. Similar abuses of the Mining Law have constrained the issuance of rights-of-way, land exchanges, protection of cultural resources, and other actions in the public interest.

Current regulations constrain the Bureau's options for bonding mining operations. In addition, there are regulatory limitations on which types of operations can have reclamation stipulations placed on them.

Recommendation

That consideration be given to several policy and regulatory actions to reduce fraud and abuse in mining law administration on minerals that are extracted from Federal lands. These actions would require public support and consensus, and represent excellent opportunities to provide far-reaching benefits to the American public absent statutory reform.

1. Raise the priority for pursuit of mining law fraud and abuse cases with the Department of Justice. U.S. Attorneys have traditionally assigned a relatively low priority to pursuit of these fraud and abuse cases. Increased priority and/or increased U.S. Attorney resources devoted to these cases could reduce trespass and the blocking of legitimate uses.

2. Pursue regulatory changes to severely restrict opportunities for residential occupancy on mining claims. Flagrant and questionable residential occupancy would be eliminated, but for bona fide operators there would be temporary facilities such as trailers to reduce the risk of vandalism and exposure to on-site mining-related hazards by the general public.

3. Pursue regulatory changes in 43 CFR 3809 to modify the 5-acre "threshold" currently used to differentiate between"notices" and plans of operation. (Notices cover disturbances of 5-acres or less and require no approval from BLM prior to starting operations. The Bureau may not attach any stipulations to operations conducted under a notice. Plans of operations address greater than 5-acres of disturbance and require environmental assessment and approval from BLM.)

   Modify the regulations to change the above threshold from being acreage-dependent to being impact-dependent. Decisions would be made up front by BLM as to whether proposed operations would be covered under a notice or a plan of operations based on a brief site-specific analysis of potential adverse impacts to surface resources. This system is currently used by the U.S. Forest Service. This option could assist significantly in minimizing adverse impacts on surface resources but would place a much greater administrative burden on the Bureau.

4. Pursue regulatory and policy changes to allow bonding, at the discretion of the BLM authorized officer, to ensure reclamation of operations, regardless of acreage to be disturbed. Currently, regulations prohibit bonding of operations conducted under a "notice" (5 acres or less). In addition, Bureau policy restricts bonding to mining operations (of greater than 5 acres) or to exploration conducted by operations with a past record of noncompliance.

   Reclamation would be more easily ensured through new bonding requirements. Bonding requirements, however, could inhibit the amount of mineral exploration on public lands by increasing the "up front" costs to start operations. Individual prospectors and small companies would likely feel the greatest relative financial impact. Bonds may be difficult to obtain for some operators.

Recent public views to reform mining law by statutory changes

What is referred to today as the 1872 Mining Law has its origins in past mining rules and practices. The General Mining Law of May 10, 1872, replaced much of the earlier mining acts and common miner rules of conduct. The 1872 law has been amended a number of times. The general trend to these amendments has been to remove minerals from the operation of the 1872 Mining Law (location) and place them in salable or leaseable categories.

With Congressional interest increasing it is appropriate that comments on the proposals of others be addressed. The basis for any statutory reform should be:

1. Preservation and promotion of a viable U.S. minerals industry.

2. Provide private exploration and development of the mineral resources in quantities and at prices determined by the marketplace with consideration for national security aspects of certain rare, critical or strategic minerals.

3. Provide for administering the great number of mining claims and mineral deposits that are still part of the public domain but where rights have been established under the present system of laws and regulations (unpatented mining claims).

4. Protect the environment as well as non-mining uses of the public lands.

Concepts and specific changes noted by outside interests considering statutory reform include:

1. Preserve, subject to fair and even-handed regulatory control including the requirement for reclamation/rehabilitation, the right to explore for, locate, develop and produce a mineral property based on principles of self-initiation and determination (location system).

2. Provide, through statutory language:

   - A right to use the claimed land for mining purposes

   - Certainty of development and production of a valuable mineral deposit as well as reclamation of the areas disturbed

   - Patent only the mineral estate for claims located after the mining law amendments. The mineral estate patent would remove the land from any classification action adverse to the mineral development during the period of mining activity

   - Full cost recovery in processing a mineral patent application

3. Provide the opportunity for all pre-amended statute claimants to proceed to patent, under existing law, within ten years of passage of the amendment; if patent is not achieved by the said date, the claimants would be subject to the amended mining law.

4. Only metallic and rare-earth minerals will be developed by self initiative and determination (location system). All others will be sold competitively or through negotiated contract. Free use of mineral materials to public agencies will be preserved.

5. All surface disturbance will require reclamation at the discretion of the surface managing agency. Bonding for the reclamation of lands disturbed by development and production activity will be at the discretion of the surface managing agency. BLM and Forest Service criteria for bonding will be based on an assessment of environmental hazards.

6. Insure that all non-energy mineral potential is treated as a resource in all land management agency planning documents.

7. Provide for payment of an annual rental fee to hold a mining claim. This would be at the option of the claimant and in lieu of the requirement for annual assessment work which is now required under the mining statutes.

Mineral Exploration

Issue

Twentieth century urban America has lost sight of the land as the source of tangible resources that make our life style what it is. To many, gasoline comes from a tank buried at the corner service station. At the same time, affluent America has found a new source of recreation in the natural beauty of our nation's public lands. There are many people and numerous special interest groups who want to preserve those values from disruption, particularly that associated with mineral extraction. This presents an ever increasing challenge for those attempting to develop policy governing exploration for mineral resources, within the realm of multiple use management. The major question is how should the Bureau keep open the public lands for mineral exploration and extraction?

Status

The declining availability of public lands for mineral exploration has received considerable national attention. Increased public land withdrawals and land classifications that block mining claims under the Mining Law of 1872 or mineral leases under the Mineral Lands Leasing Act of 1920 are of serious concern. Failure to address revocations in land use plans has also led to major legal issues on public lands.

How much public land will or should be available for mineral exploration? Currently, half of the Federal Land base, or about 320 million acres, are withdrawn, and about 50 million acres of BLM and Forest Service land are now under study for possible wilderness designation. In this atmosphere of continuing pressure for public land withdrawals, it is important to review the unique nature of mineral deposits and the differences between short-term views of mineral resources and long-term trends. Recognition of these differences suggests a need for a new perspective on mineral management and the importance of preserving opportunities for exploration.

The Federal Land Policy and Management Act reiterates that the public lands be managed in a manner which recognizes the Nation's need for domestic sources of minerals and other resources. The Federal Land Policy and Management Act also provides for improved inventory, planning, and decision processes. Currently, for available lands, BLM actively encourages and facilitates the development by private industry of public land mineral resources in a manner that satisfies national and local needs and provides for economically and environmentally sound exploration, extraction, and reclamation practices.

Minerals are a major source of raw materials used in the manufacture of products vital to our nation's economy and our national security. Congress has become concerned that the United States is becoming more and more dependent on foreign sources for raw materials, and therefore, actions that withdraw or close Federal lands to future mineral exploration and development need to be carefully weighed.

For example, Congress included provisions in both the Wilderness Act and the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (Section 603) requiring agency assessments of the mineral potential in areas recommended for wilderness.

These included site-specific mineral surveys conducted by the U.S. Geological Survey and the Bureau of Mines. However, these studies were conducted on what is referred to as the reconnaissance level. This means that the assessments were based on surface and underground geologic mapping and sampling, airborne geophysical surveys, and geochemical studies. No actual drilling programs, which are necessary to accurately judge mineral potential, could be done because of the prohibitive cost.

The inherent nature of the mineral industry is that favorable conditions for development of a particular mineral commodity or deposit are constantly changing. As economic conditions and mineral extraction/processing technology improve and new uses for minerals are discovered, exploration efforts increase and mineral deposits previously uneconomic to produce become viable and necessary to our society. It is not only the as-yet-unidentified mineral resources that should be carefully considered, but the dramatic changes occurring in technology affecting the use of known minerals.

Today, a particular mineral may not be economic to mine because demand is low, but if research finds an important use for such a mineral, demand can increase quickly and therefore this county's need for that particular mineral.

An example is the current scientific excitement surrounding rare earths and their use in superconductivity research. Ninety-seven percent (97%) of the Nation's rare earths are mined in the California Desert. Previously, these minerals were not highly sought after and had limited uses. Now, they are at the forefront of technology that could revolutionize electrical energy transmission, transportation, military defense systems, and many other critical applications. New uses are constantly being discovered for more well-known minerals such as gold, making them valuable for such futuristic applications as space travel.

The difference between minerals and most other natural resources is fundamental: What can't be seen, can't be inventoried. BLM nor anyone else has yet to discover the "x-ray vision" that would allow an accounting of the type, grade, amount, and geographic location of mineralization.

Because of this limitation, public land mineral statutes and related regulations and policies encourage private exploration of the unknown. Authorizations to do so are controlled by mining and reclamation plans with requirements to protect and preserve, where possible, the non-mineral resources such as wildlife, endangered species, recreation and open space. Leasing or claim staking is entirely at the election of the risk-taking mineral industry, but the real pay off does not come for industry until millions of dollars have been invested and a discovery made.

There will continue to be a need for irreplaceable, nonrenewable resources, and some part of this need can be supplied from the public lands. It is at least equally important to preserve the opportunity to discover and develop the hidden mineral resources for future generations.

The western lands of the United States will continue to be subject to increasing and often competing demands for their resources. It will require increasing ingenuity to resolve conflicts among competing uses. In resolving these conflicts, it will continue to be important to appreciate the unique circumstances of mineral occurrence and use. It is also noteworthy that reclamation is now been considered by most mining companies as a part of doing business.

Many advances have been made in the technology of reclamation, and studies continue to create and improve reclamation practices that ensure a suitable post-mining land use.

An axiom of experienced minerals managers is that absence of evidence is not evidence of absence. The challenge for management is to manage public land so as to minimize commitment of irretrievable resources while at the same time preserving our opportunities for economic welfare.

Recommendation

That proposed actions which remove public lands from mineral exploration and extraction be carefully reviewed and decision options which keep public lands open to the optimum number of multiple-uses be stressed.

Issues For The 90's

People and Public Land: Important Relationships

The lands the Bureau of Land Management manages are the remainder of the original estate of the nation and are used, enjoyed, and available to all Americans. In that sense, BLM land is the "first estate" of national lands in America. Use of this "first estate" has increased dramatically among traditional and new, young, urban constituencies. Americans are becoming increasingly aware of the significant and continuous socioeconomic benefits, values, and opportunities that these rich lands possess. Nevertheless, a large segment of the American public is still unaware of the tangible and intangible assets the public lands provide for all Americans.

Unfortunately, some public land users harbor narrow land use interests and only half-heartedly support, or even understand, the many uses public lands now provide. Equally important, even larger numbers of interested citizens, mostly urban, rarely visit public lands, but champion single interest causes through membership in special interest groups. Further, some user and interest organizations and individuals understand well the importance of the BLM mission, but work tirelessly to tilt decisions to extreme positions which they usually perceive as moderate and in the greater public interest. The narrow perspectives of some user and interest groups can ignore or underestimate the importance of economic benefits from public lands on the one hand, or underestimate the importance of protecting the land and the environment on the other.

As demands on lands and resources grow in magnitude and complexity, as proposals and actions become more controversial within public decision processes, the Bureau must strive for better understanding of the mandate to provide for multiple uses, support a developing economy, and maintain a clean, healthy environment.

People and public lands forge important relationships that must be nutured and improved upon. Wider and more comprehensive understanding of public land values and BLM's mission, improved methods for public participation in BLM planning and decision-making, and support of the development of a public land use ethic are all elements required to forge a stronger partnership between the public lands and the people. These issues, and recommendations for addressing them, are summarized on the following pages.

Recognition of Public Lands

Issue

Use of public lands is expanding significantly by the American public, but citizens are often unable to identify BLM lands on maps or clearly identify on-the-ground lands managed by the Bureau. With poor identity it is almost impossible to explain and obtain public understanding and acceptance of BLM's Congressionally designated mission. What is the name for the lands which are managed by BLM? Does BLM need clearer identification and description of the lands it administers such as that enjoyed by "National Parks", "Wildlife Refuges", "National Forests" and the like?

Status

The lands BLM manages are the remainder of the original estate of the nation and are used, enjoyed, and available to all Americans. These lands are recognized as the permanent estate of the American people as set out in Federal Land Policy and Management Act.

In early legislation, names used were "vacant", "unappropriated", "unreserved", and "public domain". In the Taylor Grazing Act are names like "public grazing land", "public range", "vacant public lands", "public domain", "unreserved and unappropriated public domain", and "Federal land". At times, the lands became known as "Taylor Grazing Lands", "Federal Range", and "Grazing District and Non-Grazing District Lands". In 1964 with the passage of the Classification and Multiple Use Act, the name public lands was defined to mean those Federal lands managed by BLM. In the late 1960's, the lands were titled "National Resource Lands" which didn't stick with a changing administration. Federal lands seems to have been legislated into meaning all U.S. property. No one has used American or U.S.A. in connection with lands; the Forest Service has used USFS and U.S. Forest Service in its agency title.

In 1976 with the Federal Land Policy and Management Act, "Federal Land" seems to include all lands owned by the United States, "public lands" are defined as those federal lands managed by BLM. In 1979 there was an effort to title the BLM-managed lands as the Public Rangelands. Some, especially in forested areas objected that the term was not descriptive of all areas (an argument which has validity, but not all National Forest lands are forested).

BLM lands provide many different kinds of opportunities for the public which are needed and demanded on an ever-increasing scale. They provide uses of a different nature than the National Park System or the National Wildlife Refuge System. Today, BLM manages more recreation in the West than the National Park Service, more wildlife habitat than the Fish and Wildlife Service, A significant amount of timber, and all of the Federal minerals.

The BLM lands need a name with which the public can relate and identify; all Americans should know that the name identifies lands managed by BLM. Because of no name or sense of permanence, these lands are not now identified on road atlas maps which do depict National Forests, National Parks, and National Wildlife Refuges. BLM lands clearly need a name "identifier" comparable to National Refuges, National Parks, and National Forests.

Criteria useful in selecting a name would include that it be unique and brief, receive public acceptance, identify the character of public lands, and possibly portray the BLM mission. No single name will likely meet all the criteria, but the criteria provides a means of discussing the advantages and disadvantages of various proposals.

It seems logical to use the term "National" since it well definesother systems such as, National Forests, National Parks, and National Wildlife Refuges.

Names that have surfaced in discussion are:

- National Rangelands
- National Conservation Lands
- National Wildlands
- National Multiple-Use Lands
- National Lands
- National Public Lands
- National Resource Lands
- National Natural Resource Lands
- National Heritage Lands

Just as there is a Grand Canyon National Park and a Washington Monument within the National Park System and a Tonto National Forest and a Pawnee Grassland within the National Forest System, so there would be within the new National name already designated areas such as the California Desert National Conservation Area, Bighorn Basin Wildlands, Sonoran Desert Wildlands, Paria wilderness, and San Pedro Conservation Area. Each specific area should have its local name and its own planning, uses, constraints, and supporters. Some areas could even have descriptors such as Eugene O&C Forest which is part of a broader descriptor. The idea of designations sets in motion some sense of equality; BLM not only would have designations for wilderness areas, Areas of Critical Environmental Concern, Wild and Scenic rivers, but a designation for all areas intended to be managed into the future, the last of the continuation of our nation's first estate.

Once a name is selected, several alternatives are available to make the designation. They include a Congressional statutory designation, a Presidential Executive Order or a Secretarial Order.

Recommendation

That recognition of BLM's multiple use mandate would be substantially enhanced with attendant public support for the BLM mission by adopting a meaningful name for the lands the Bureau manages.

Enhancing Management Decision Making

Issue

At all organization levels of BLM, decision-making often involves issues which are controversial. These situations, not infrequently, result in litigation or proposed legislation by special interests which constrain full multiple-use resource management. However, often in other similar situations, individual BLM managers have developed and implemented shared decision-making processes which have permitted actions to proceed with excellent support from all participating interests. There is good support within the Bureau for adopting the shared decision-making approach as a bureau-wide operating policy for the 90's.

Should BLM develop such a policy and implement it in appropriate situations?

Status

As general policy, BLM has endorsed public involvement for a long time. It is required by law, regulation and policy in the planning system, environmental documents, activity and project plans and in the development of rules and regulations. Currently, much of the public involvement process focuses on pre-decisional steps such as the analysis of alternative courses of action to achieve a preferred result. The actual decisions are made by agency managers alone.

However, as the demands on the lands and resources has grown in magnitude and complexity more and more BLM actions are becoming highly controversial or just need a great deal of coordination among all interests. Interest groups have become more powerful and sophisticated as issues become polarized; legislation or judicial resolutions are sought. This can cause important actions to be delayed, withdrawn, cancelled or implemented inappropriately.

There have been many excellent examples of controversial actions where individual BLM managers have thoughtfully planned and implemented a shared decision-making approach which has resulted in agreement, support and commitment from the parties of interest. This approach has also resulted in continuing, long-term benefits between BLM, the public, other agencies and elected officials. The Stewardship Committees, the Arizona Wilderness Legislation, the Carrizo Plains Project, and the Boise Front Coalition are a few examples.

In many ways adopting the shared-cooperative-collaborative decision-making approach is the next logical step in the evolution of a tradition of public involvement and partnership. Adopting this approach would be seen internally and externally as a major positive step for BLM.

Recommendation

That BLM develop as an internal project, a shared decision-making process designed to achieve public understanding, agreement and support for decisions building on its past successes. The approach would be internally initiated and oriented using BLM people who have had demonstrated successes in the decision-making process. They would develop general guidelines and training including internal conferences/workshops for BLM managers.

BLM could also develop and implement a shared decision-making approach with full input by external groups in order to design a process that would foster public understanding, agreement and support. This approach could involve a wide spectrum of public land interest groups, both national and local; academic and professional societies; consultants; and Congressional staff. It could be a prelude to even redefining how the Bureau might best use its various Advisory Boards and Councils.

This should generate more immediate public support for whatever new pro-cesses are adopted. It will require a significant commitment of Bureau resources, both in its design, implementation and monitoring of results. However, the potential benefits in reducing controversy, protests and appeals of BLM decisions would appear to be worth the effort.

Developing a Land-Use Ethic

Issue

Should the BLM further promote a multiple-use land use ethic on the part of the public? New constituencies, often young and urban, do not understand the land or value the public's resources. Both the use and demand for protection of the land are part of a continuing national trend. Should then, BLM expand its outreach to better inform the public and gain appreciation of a broader segment of the American people?

Status

Public land use is increasing among traditional and new young urban constituencies. The use is increasing by absolute amount of use, types of use and number of users. As public use has dramatically increased, demands and conflicts have grown, challenging BLM's management and perhaps more importantly, the protection of the resource base.

Most traditional commercial commodity users become aware of the BLM and its requirements through the permit or license process, but these processes do not ensure an appreciation of public lands. And most newer and non-commercial users often have less opportunity for understanding and appreciating the land.

The "Take Pride In America" (TPIA) program has expanded public awareness that each citizen shares ownership and responsibility in caring for public lands. The "Operation Respect" program has also promoted positive land use behavior by users. Some state programs have focused on school lesson plans, improved maps, brochures, high BLM field visibility during hunting season or at recreation events to spread information about public land access, safety, courteous behavior, and private landowner rights. In summary, BLM already conducts a moderate level of land ethic outreach activities with users and the general public.

A principal difficulty with current efforts appears to lie with many excellent but broad national programs that have limited local impact and with BLM constituent groups. Another difficulty may lie with the fragmentation of many good local programs which lack collective impact and public support. Objectives of outreach programs are to minimize direct personal conflict and resource abuse, to increase awareness and understanding of public land values and functions for society, to build understanding of the BLM lands and their scientific/educational values for schools and colleges over the long-term, and to educate the public on individual responsibility and community stewardship. New efforts might well be collectively structured among many agencies to accomplish large benefits for all natural resources and the Nation.

Most managers agree that BLM has the capability to significantly improve new and traditional constituencies' appreciation for public lands through a restructuring of its public outreach program.

Recommendation

That BLM foster a land use ethic for the future which focuses on the environmentally economic and long-term societal benefits of wise application of the principles of multiple use. The Bureau should inventory, consolidate and re-structure current outreach programs to develop a ground up outreach program for local and state implementation under a national umbrella plan. The umbrella plan may include expanding "Operation Respect" bureau-wide or embracing all activities under "Take Pride In America". It could build upon an existing theme of: "Public Lands, U.S.A. — Use, Share, Appreciate".

Issues For The 90's

Management for the 90's

Technological change is one of the major keys to BLM's ability to meet needs of all the users of the public lands in this Nation. Management has found that, in order to keep up-to-date information on the millions of acres of lands, the hundreds of thousands of mining claims, the vast numbers of recreationists, as well as the multitude of resources for which it has responsibility, the Bureau must adopt a forward-looking approach to constant improvement of it's automated systems and procedures to reach the required efficiency for effectively performing its multiple use management responsibilities and for delivery of all the public services demanded. In concert with this technological shift, BLM is developing strategies for dealing with a more rapidly evolving organization and the different attributes of the knowledgeable worker. The Bureau values its approximately 8,500 employees as its most important resource and has taken steps to focus attention on human resource management and development. In addition, a number of initiatives are underway to improve service to the public, as well as Bureau productivity. These issues, and recommendations for addressing them, are summarized on the following pages.

Human Resources Management

Issue

To complete ongoing employee development activities, additional efforts will be required to maintain a highly motivated BLM workforce, adapt to changing requirements resulting from automation, and increase progress in hiring/developing minorities and women. The question requiring resolution is what specific new efforts should be undertaken?

Status

The Bureau strives for excellence in management of its resources, both human and natural. The approximately 8,500 BLM employees are BLM's most important resource and BLM has taken steps to focus attention on human resource management and development. With recent budget constraints, the workforce has been shrinking and the average age of Bureau employees is rising. The Bureau has a large population of professional employees concentrated in the 35-50 age range who have reached journeyman level status and face severe competition for further career advancement. At the same time, relatively few beginning level employees are entering the workforce. This raises concerns about availability of highly qualified personnel for leadership positions 10 to 20 years in the future. Additionally, partly as a result of BLM's occupation mix and geographic locations, women and minorities are severely under-represented in parts of the BLM workforce.

The Bureau's basic human resources policy is to retain its workforce and to further develop its skills, knowledge, and abilities to meet existing and future needs. Some of the more innovative directions and activities the Bureau has undertaken include establishing a comprehensive careers program which addresses the range of needs from the new employee through the executive, sponsoring a major workshop oriented to further integrating the BLM workforce through special focus on minorities and women, and undertaking a major initiative to increase morale, direction, and agency pride.

Briefly described, the BLM Comprehensive Careers Program has these features:

- An orientation for all new employees to welcome them and to provide community, agency, office and job information;
- A seminar for new employees to increase their awareness and knowledge of BLM and how the agency manages its critical land management issues. Also, through increased awareness, employees will be able to understand how they contribute to the mission and how they can better plan their careers;
- Training to provide all employees with the skills and knowledge needed to perform at the "full performance level" in their specialty and to grow and develop in their careers;
- Opportunities for employees to enrich their careers through participation in such activities as professional societies, special and teaching assignments, and program leadership activities;.

- A workshop to provide the opportunity for employees to ascertain their readiness for supervisory/management positions;

- A workshop to provide middle managers with the opportunity to enhance their leadership skills; and

- A Senior Executive Service Candidate Development Program to provide trained people for future Executive positions.

Except for the "careerist" component the BLM Careers Program is currently operational and has been well received by the workforce.

The continuing question with respect to human resources management is defining the optimum level of investment in our most important asset, the workforce. This level of investment revolves around decisions on a number of interrelated workforce concerns and activities. The more significant of these are discussed briefly below.

Nonsupervisory/Managerial Career Paths—The career path for employees who aspire to supervisory/managerial positions in BLM is well defined. However, fewer options and a less clear career track are available for technical specialist and administrative positions. Unlike some sister bureaus, BLM only infrequently rewards the "super technician" through grade level recognition of superior technical ability and does not make major employee development investments to "grow our own" super technicians. As a result, the Bureau loses some of its best technicians to other agencies or the private sector. At the same time the need for recognized experts in various natural resource disciplines is expanding with increased sophistication of interest groups and the explosion in information technology. Expanding opportunities for nonsupervisory career paths to higher level positions as one means of addressing the baby boom bulge issue and keeping mid-career employees highly motivated. Opportunities for alternative career paths need to be examined.

Recruitment/Affirmative Action Initiatives—The Bureau participates in the OPM sponsored Women's Executive Leadership Program which is designed to provide training and specialized experience for women at the GS 9-11 level who have demonstrated leadership potential. Additionally, BLM utilizes special hiring authorities under the Co-op Student, Stay-in-School, and Upward Mobility programs. These efforts coupled with participation in special outreach recruiting activities with historically black colleges, etc., have resulted in some progress in minority/female recruiting and advancement. Nevertheless, with a shrinking overall workforce, BLM has not been able to substantially reduce female/minority underrepresentation (as compared to the national civilian workforce profile). This is particularly the case in upper-level supervisory/managerial jobs in the Bureau. In part, this is also because retention rates for minority and female employees are low. Two areas hold promise for improving minority/female representation—accelerated development of current staff and targeted recruiting to bring more minority/female employees on board at entry levels.

Retraining—With greater emphasis on automation technology and the improved capabilities it provides, the Bureau has an increasing need for employees skilled in information resource management. Although this need will be realized in part through recruiting of new employees, personnel and budget constraints create a greater need in the short run to adjust the skill mix of employees already on board through retraining. By developing increased opportunities and incentives for employees to gain information resource management skills, BLM will be able to develop a nucleus of people with combined skills in information resource management and natural resource management to help lead the way in using modern technology in natural resource administration.

Recommendation

That a review be initiated of alternative career path opportunities for technical specialists and implement appropriate changes. Continue and expand recruiting outreach and developmental opportunities for minorities and women. Develop and implement retraining initiatives to help meet staffing requirements for an environment that more fully uses automation.

Information Resource Management

Issue

The effects of automation on BLM will be as dramatic as the implementation of multiple use management over the last 20 years. BLM, by harnessing computer technology on a large scale, can make a quantum leap in its professional capabilities and is making resource management decisions on the public lands. Managing automation in BLM is essentially the opportunity of a lifetime. To this end, BLM is implementing an automated Land Information System and modernizing its existing computer systems in the early 1990's. This will permit the agency to meet the increasing demand for information about the public lands, to process applications for use of these lands, and to more effectively use its information and data assets in managing the lands and their resources. What is the appropriate time schedule and investment level for implementing the Bureau's target automated systems?

Status

The BLM has carefully planned what automation is appropriate. User requirements are the basis for determining the investment needed and the schedule for procurements. BLM has concentrated on defining what the users (primarily in field offices) need in order to do their jobs better. Automation is seen as a tool to assist them.

Among other benefits, automation in BLM will enable the agency to:

- process faster applications for use of the public lands
- respond to public queries more accurately and swiftly
- identify potential land use conflicts and identify alternatives more effectively
- analyze alternative uses for resource management decisions more thoroughly
- produce more easily graphic displays of information available about a parcel of land
- generate more simply necessary management reports and statistics
- exchange data with other agencies at less cost
- become a partner with state and county governments and private industry in sharing land and resource information.

The Automated Land and Mineral Record System, a piece of the overall automation effort, was initiated after the energy boom of 1980-82 resulted in a massive backlog of unprocessed oil and gas lease applications. Requests for leases rose from the average 20,000 annually to nearly 80,000 in 1982, and BLM's traditional procedures were unable to cope because they were based on handling papers in case files.

Automated Land and Mineral Record System was selected as one of the few Presidential Priority Systems by the Office of Management and Budget in 1987, after BLM documented the value of automating these records and obtained approval for nearly $150 million in additional budget requests in FY86-92. It was chosen because it highlighted how automation could dramatically improve an organization's ordinary procedures and benefit the public.

BLM has taken a comprehensive approach and examined all its functions, not just its records management tasks, in developing its automation plans. It is coordinating the Land Information System implementation with the modernization of its current computer systems handling the administrative work (such as finance, budget, personnel, vehicle reports, etc.) and office automation tasks (such as word processing, spreadsheets, calendars, etc.)

The Land Information System development includes an Automated Land and Mineral Record System and the application of Geographic Information System technology to resource management tasks. These include land use planning, timber sales, wildlife management, strategic and critical minerals management, law enforcement, Cadastral survey, and a variety of activities associated with day-to-day jobs in managing the public lands. The automated technology will permit BLM managers to respond quickly to questions about individual parcels of land and to coordinate the resource management with other Federal, State, and local agencies. The Land Information System will be designed so it can be implemented in stages, rather than try to do everything at once, with the Automated Land and Mineral Record System portion to be among the first capabilities to become operational in all BLM offices.

The use of the new technology will generate changes in the BLM organization. The skills mix of the BLM personnel will be different, the tools they use to do their jobs will be expanded, and the procedures they follow will be modified to take advantage of the automated capabilities. The adjustments from the traditional patterns is a significant management issue, with a number of studies underway now to identify how best to address the concerns in staffing, training and modifying facilities.

BLM is standardizing its data and implementing a significant data administration program to ensure its automated information is consistent and sufficient to meet the needs. The focus is on developing common data standards and a "corporate data base," where people can update and retrieve information about an area without having to go to separate file cabinets or offices as they do today. Data sharing with other agencies and the general public will be greatly improved after the individual paper, mylar, and some automated files are combined. One result of this automation will be greater accuracy and completeness, since computerized files can be matched against each other and inconsistencies corrected.

BLM has automated nearly all the legal land descriptions and has completed entering approximately 75% of the land status data. The automation of the geographic coordinates, the essential tie between all the records data based on descriptions of land parcels and the resources data described by latitude/longitude coordinates, will be completed in FY92. This will identify the location of the Public Land Survey System on the ground and finally eliminate the need to redraw by hand the parcel boundaries from the Master Title Plats to the U.S. Geological Service quadrangle maps.

BLM will issue a Request for Procurement in mid-1989 for the final system design and the necessary computer software, hardware, and data communications technology. The award is scheduled for June, 1990. After a pilot test in New Mexico in 1992, which is one of the risk management checkpoints in implementing this technology in BLM, all BLM offices will begin to modernize their current computer systems and fully implement the Land Information System in 1993.

Recommendation

That the current procurement schedule be continued, the budget resources should be allocated as the needs are identified, and the recommendations of the ongoing studies of organizational issues should be implemented after the studies are completed.

Initiatives To Improve Service and Productivity

Issue

Which of several ongoing productivity enhancement and quality management activities should be implemented on a Bureau-wide basis to improve efficiency and quality and further enhance the Bureau's reputation for management excellence?

Status

The Bureau has initiatives underway which are oriented to improving service to the public, improving employee productivity and morale, and enhancing natural resource management. On a pilot basis, BLM is adapting and testing successful private sector initiatives including relying on human judgment, rather than overregulated systems to make decisions, making clear performance distinctions among workers with prompt meaningful rewards for better work, and treating employees from top to bottom as adults. BLM is essentially encouraging employees to experiment with changing the best way to do business. Private sector experience has demonstrated that giving line managers and individual employees more decision making flexibility can increase performance and quality. The goal is to liberate the energies of employees by removing barriers to full performance.

One of the most ambitious Bureau initiatives is the Productivity Pilot District Program whereby four BLM Districts are experimenting with a variety of new approaches to doing the Bureau's business. The program was initiated in October 1987 and will continue for three years. There will be formal evaluations of results and consideration of successful initiatives for Bureau-wide implementation.

The primary focus of the pilot program is to improve the Bureau's capability to manage resources. The program objectives include improving the quality of work life for employees; establishing a more proactive organization; creating more responsive resource management; and, improving productivity and the quality of work. This is a "bottom-up" initiative. Ideas for testing come directly from the field employees who are also part of the process of analyzing and implementing the ideas. To date the program has generated about 800 new ideas. A steering committee serves as a liaison to the Bureau Management Team and recommends approval/disapproval of proposals which exceed the authority of the state director to implement.

Examples of ideas currently being tested include:

- Locally tailored Financial Management System reporting;
- variable work schedule/flex-time;
- employee fitness and health screening program;
- higher procurement authority delegation;
- permit employees to volunteer to work outside their specialty; and,
- employee reward systems.

Examples of suggestions under study or with waivers pending include:

- allow Resource Areas to redesign office space utilization;
- allow Resource Areas to design/contract construction of office building; and,
- involve advisory groups in setting management priorities.

Future efforts will concentrate on idea analysis with the goal of providing improved on-the-ground resource management.

Another ongoing productivity initiative is the Department's Productivity Enhancement Fund Program. Its objective is to demonstrate that financing innovative, low-cost productivity improvement projects will provide an incentive to managers to experiment with untried methods and technologies to increase efficiency and effectiveness. Seven of the 21 projects approved by the Department in FY 1988 were BLM projects, and five more projects were submitted for approval in FY 1989. A few examples include:

1. Utilizing a centralized/automated law enforcement computer terminal.
2. Using portable PC's in wildlife monitoring and data collection.
3. Developing scanning technology for land information system input.
4. Utilizing voice-controlled computer interface.

As with successful Productivity Pilot Program initiatives, the Bureau hopes to transfer effective Productivity Enhancement Fund projects to other appropriate Bureau offices. The Department has proposed to match future Bureau investments on a 50-50 basis if Congressional approval can be gained.

The Office of Management and Budget recently created a Federal Quality Management Institute to train agencies in new concepts of Total Quality Management developed by leading American management experts. The concept of total quality management integrates many of the concepts incorporated in the BLM pilot district efforts plus quality improvement councils and sophisticated systems for measuring work output quality. The Headquarters Management Team has received training from the institute and is currently considering implementation in the Bureau on a pilot or limited Bureau-wide basis.

Recommendation

That the results of pilot productivity enhancing efforts currently underway be reviewed and that decisions be made for Bureau-wide implementation of successful initiatives.